

## Message Text

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ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 ARA-16 ISO-00 SCI-06 NSF-04 PM-07 COME-00

INT-08 EB-11 L-03 IO-14 DODE-00 RSC-01 DRC-01 /074 W

----- 112856

P R 042238Z MAR 74

FM AMEMBASSY LIMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9106

INFO AMEMBASSY QUITO

AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LIMA 1724

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: OCLR, TPHY, PE

SUBJ: GOP RESCINDS AUTHORIZATION FOR R/V KANA KEOKI AND R/V  
YAQUINA TO SET OFF SEISMIC EXPLOSIONS

REF: LIMA 1006, LIMA 968, LIMA 158

1. BY NOTE OF MARCH 1, GOP MINISTRY OF NAVY NOTIFIED EMBASSY THAT IT WAS RESCINDING PREVIOUS AUTHORIZATIONS FOR KANA KEOKI AND YAQUINA TO SET OFF EXPLOSIONS WITHIN PERUVIAN TERRITORIAL WATERS UNTIL "FURTHER NOTICE." NOTE GAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR THIS DECISION, BUT ASKED EMBASSY TO NOTIFY VESSELS OF MINISTRY'S ORDER. NOTE DID NOT RESCIND ANY OTHER PART OF PREVIOUS AUTHORIZATIONS.

2. NAVAL MINISTRY UNABLE, AT OPERATING LEVEL, TO OFFER EMBASSY ANY EXPLANATION EXCEPT TO SAY THAT DECISION WAS REACHED AT "HIGHEST RANKS OF MINISTRY." SUBSEQUENTLY, EMBASSY INFORMED BY PERUVIAN GEOPHYSICAL INSTITUTE (PGI), THE SHIPS' COORDINATING AGENCY, THAT PGI ON FEBRUARY 28 LEARNED THAT MINISTRY OF FISHERIES WAS DISTURBED BY BELIEF THAT EXPLOSIONS MIGHT HARM FISH STOCKS AND THEREFORE MADE DECISION TO DENY PERMISSION TO SET OFF EXPLOSIVE CHARGES. PGI THEN APPEALED DIRECTLY TO RANKING GOP OFFICIALS, EXPLAINING SCIENTIFIC

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NATURE OF VENTURE AND THAT EXPLOSIONS WOULD HAVE NO APPRECIABLE

EFFECT ON FISH POPULATION. HOWEVER, PGI TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER MARCH 4, THAT, NOTWITHSTANDING EXPLANATIONS, PRIME MINISTER HAD REFUSED CHANGE INITIAL DECISION AND THAT, THEREFORE, PLANNED SERIES OF EXPLOSIONS SET FOR MARCH 6 AND 7 WOULD NOT BE SET OFF. PGI IS IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH BOTH SHIPS AND HAS NOTIFIED THEM OF MINISTRY DECISION WITH WHICH THEY WILL COMPLY WITHIN CLAIMED TERRITORIAL WATERS OF PERU. PGI LIAISON OFFICIALS TOLD EMBASSY OFFICER THAT SHIPS' SCHEDULES WILL NOT BE CHANGED SUBSTANTIALLY, SINCE THEY HAD ORIGINALLY PLANNED FIRE THE EXPLOSIVES ONLY DURING THE TWO DAYS.

3. PGI SPECULATED THAT EXTENSIVE PRESS PUBLICITY WHICH SHIPS RECEIVED LAST WEEK WAS REASON FOR CANCELLATION ONCE FACT OF EXPLOSIONS BECAME KNOWN WITHIN CERTAIN GOP AGENCIES. IN THIS CONTEXT, ONE PRESS STORY SPECULATED THAT THESE KINDS OF EXPLOSIONS MIGHT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR EARTHQUAKES. PGI SPOKESMEN, IN EFFORT COUNTER SUCH SPECULATION, HELD PRESS CONFERENCE TO EXPLAIN EXACT NATURE OF PLANNED TESTS, AND ALSO RAISED MATTER PRIVATELY WITH GOP. THESE EFFORTS WERE UNAVAILING.

4. COMMENT: GIVEN INABILITY OF GOP'S OWN PGI TO OBTAIN REVERSAL OF DECISION, EMBASSY BELIEVES IT WOULD BE FUTILE TO ATTEMPT INTERVENE DIRECTLY WITH GOP. THIS DECISION, IN THE FACE OF CLEAR EXPLANATIONS BY GOP'S OWN SCIENTISTS ABOUT NATURE OF PLANNED EXPLOSIONS, DEMONSTRATES ONCE AGAIN THE EXTREME SENSITIVITY WHICH GOP LEADERS ATTACH TO ALLEGED MISUSE OF THEIR TERRITORIAL WATERS AND/OR NATURAL RESOURCES, PARTICULARLY WHEN ISSUE HAS BEEN RAISED PUBLICLY.  
BELCHER

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## Message Attributes

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